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Subject: Physical Hindrances in Spiritual Life.

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A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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PHYSICAL HINDRANCES IN SPIRITUAL LIFE.

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak.”—MAT. XXVI., 41.

These passionate words were spoken in the hour of our Saviour's great anguish in the garden. Although he had a right to the sympathy and the comforting presence of his disciples, for whom he had done so much, and around whom he had just cast such words of love as were never uttered before nor since, by one to another, yet when he came into the strait and anguish of this preliminary trial, they fell off, as afterwards they were more disgracefully to do; and while he was in prayer they fell asleep. Returning to them, there was no impatience—not even reproach. Out of his own extreme suffering and sorrow, he found thoughts of compassion and gentleness and excuse for them. He exhorted them to watch and pray lest they should enter into temptation; but then he said, “The spirit is willing; your better part consents; but the flesh draws you down; and you fail, not from the want of right intention, but from that hindrance.”

It is not, it seems to me, an undue strain upon the words *watch* and *pray* to suppose that they stand connected with the two sides of human nature: that prayer and the spirit, that watching and the flesh, were conjoined in the Saviour's mind, and that here we have an instance of his exhortation to that labor which every Christian in this life must perform—namely, the pursuit of godliness, by the application to the secular and the spiritual parts of his being, of the peculiar and proper stimulants which belong to the nature of each.

Our Saviour, not here in terms, but throughout his teaching, recognized a life in man that aims at the highest excellence, and taught that it must be compassed in two spheres contemporaneously.

SUNDAY MORNING, Oct. 29, 1871. Lesson: I. THESS. 1-24. Hymns (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 180, 503, 898.

As the root of the tree is buried in the soil, while the top is embosomed in the sunlight, and the tree grows by a double force—by the things that are above it, and by the things that are beneath it; so man grows by the top in the luminous spiritual ether, and by the body in contact with this world, and by the whole apparatus of natural laws. And no man can live the Christian life successfully who does not conform to both spheres and their ordinances. Success requires that we have divine help from both of them, or through them both, and in each a help that is peculiar to it. In the bodily sphere, we must watch and look out for that which is needful to that sphere. In the moral sphere we must pray, or bring ourselves into communion with the ineffable and the invisible. We must, in other words, see with both eyes—the fleshly and the spiritual. Watching is the one operation; praying is the other.

The conjunction of the two is not accidental to this passage. It is not a chance that these two lives are braided together. As in the growth of a plant every additional joint protrudes another stem, so in the life which we are living the spiritual is the outgrowth of the natural.

These two spheres in which we develop the one character, cover what may be called the physical and the spiritual conditions of success in right living. Christ's conception of right living in this world was to increase the sum and force of spiritual manhood. That is distinctively Christ's teaching. We are not living in this world for its honor, nor for its pleasure, nor for its wealth, nor for its power, although we have a right to some of all of these; but by industry, by frugality, by labor, by education, by all the forces which belong to human nature, we are in this life to develop a higher and spiritual manhood.

We are to remember that our Saviour was not in the habit of condemning the world absolutely. He was neither an ascetic, nor had he secular indifferentism. He nowhere taught, when we take the compass and scope of his instruction, that men should deny themselves things that are agreeable to the whole of their being in this world; and still less did he teach that men should retire out of the world. Indeed, in his prayer with his disciples at last, he explicitly says, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of this world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil that is in it." He nowhere taught that men are to seek the true end of life by getting out of business, or by getting out of the great social fabric into which they are brought by birth. Nor did he anywhere teach that it was wicked to indulge, if it be done with moderation or self-control, in the pleasure of the eye, or the pleasure of the ear, or the pleasure of the senses in any direction.

This is the more striking if you consider how he compared with John the Baptist. There existed, in the time of our Saviour three great sects—the Pharisee, who was the Puritan of the Jews; the Sadducee, who was the liberal and skeptical man of the Jewish period; and the Essene, who was the ascetic of that time. The Essenes taught that it was positively wicked to enjoy sensuous pleasures; and they committed all manner of honest fooleries in their endeavors at self-denial in order to become better men. It is more than probable that John the Baptist was largely tinctured with their views. He did not live among men. He dwelt in the wilderness. He was clad as they were accustomed to be clad; and he fed as they were accustomed to feed. And his whole discourse was of a severe, reformatory character. There were no elements in him such as breathed the amenities of social life. *He came neither eating nor drinking*, is the description of him. He was a man of abstinent and severe habits. On every side he held himself aloof from the great affairs and thoroughfares of men, and made himself a man not among men, but aside from men, seeking a higher character than was common in his time.

Our master received baptism at his hand; and then, after some tarrying in the neighborhood, went to Galilee, and began his ministry; and his ministry was not, in that regard, the parallel of John, nor did he resemble him. On the contrary, our Master was described as being the very antithesis of John.

“John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, that he hath a devil. The Son of man came eating *and* drinking [the very opposite of John], and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine bibber.”

Neither, however, contented them. But the light which this throws on our Saviour's social habits is transcendently important; and we see it carried out in snatches in the detached history of the Master. He was accustomed to live just as those lived who were around about him. He followed in early life their pursuits. He acted according to the established customs of his time. We find him, in the more detailed account of his daily life, going with the poor as if he were poor; and going with the rich, and conforming to the customs which existed among the rich. He was a thorough Jew of his own period. In all things which were not morally wrong, he conformed to the ways of the time and the society in which he lived. He sat at the rich man's table; and though he rebuked many of the lapses and crimes of riches; though he spoke words of such weight that men quailed under them, yet we do not find that he made the possession of riches the subject-matter of a charge of moral delinquency. He participated in the largeness and bounty

of the rich man's house; and in so far endorsed it that he lived in social fellowship with rich men in the enjoyment of their hospitality. He ate what they ate, and drank what they drank. That he drank the wine of the country, and that it was fermented, there can be no question. Otherwise there could have been no such charge as that which was made against him.

"Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber."

That is to say, he was charged with being gluttonous in his food, and drunken in his drink. Of course, it was a slander; but there would have been no point to it if there had not been something in the habits of our Master from which this could be derived. And we see what it was—namely, a temperate indulgence in the ordinary luxuries and comforts which belonged to a well-appointed house in Judæa.

Nor do we find it anywhere comprehensively recorded that our Master commanded the disciples, as a part of their preparation of themselves for their special mission, to be equipped in any special manner. They were to go forth in the earth, not to rebuke this and that development of civilization and its function in society. They were nowhere ordained to set these things aside, as though they were cynics, or ascetics, or secular indifferentists. But from first to last, while the Saviour paid a wise regard to outward things in a hundred different ways, he was pleased to make an *application* of all these things, and of the whole of human life, to the interior, and not to the exterior.

It was not to teach us to build up an outward estate that we were born—though we are permitted to build that up. It was not for inculcating the pursuit of secular joy—though we are permitted to pursue that. It was as a means—not an end that the Master showed their uses. It was not to increase in any sense the force of the outward life. It was, by means of these things, and many others, designed to increase the forces of inward manhood. Christ held up the other life, as the great end of living.

"Is not the life more than meat?"

What if your head is overspread by a magnificent architecture; what if your garments are purple and brodered with gold; what if your table is magnificent in its luxury; what if every want is pampered, is not your manhood starving, after all? There is something else besides the senses. That for which a man lives is to promote something in him more than the mere power of knowledge. It is to promote the sum of his higher being.

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

A man may have estates, and provinces of estates, wealth count-

less, and all the joys which go together in the train of luxury and wealth; and yet, his life cannot be touched by these things. That is not his life which these things feed. You must touch something higher than these before you touch a man's life, or that for which he is supremely to live.

"What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

There is an aim and an end higher than power, or ambition, or pleasure, or luxury. You will find, all through Christ's ministry, that he is continually praising the higher life, and the higher manhood. It is to be developed in connection with the lower life and the lower manhood—partly by its instrumentality; but it is to be the great end and aim of every man to live to increase in himself the sum, and power, and fineness of this interior and elemental manhood, so that having lived on earth, he shall be prepared to live in the other life without the accompaniments of the flesh.

Here, then, is an ideal to be pursued by every one. The real and substantial things—that is, the physical the outward, and the visible—are but instruments by which we are seeking an ideal and higher manhood.

Our Saviour distinctly teaches that the pursuit of this great end of life is in one sense not easy; though when a man has fully entered into it, the outcome of this way of living is full of peace and pleasure. When a man institutes it, and begins to live, not for the lower but for the higher nature that is in him, he will be sure to have a life-long conflict. It is an education that is not easy. It is true that Christ's cross, and yoke, and burden, bring peace and rest; but it is none the less true that the cross *is* a cross, that the yoke *is* irksome, and that the burden *has* its appropriate weight. These are all of them correct statements as men's experience interprets them. In attempting to live for this higher manhood, we have a conflict with ourselves, with the world, with the past, with the present, with the future: not all at once, nor always; but we must meet so much resistance, and we are so unskillful, and so feeble in moral excellence, and that which is carnal is so strong in us, that no man can grow in grace without incessant vigilance and strife. Therefore it is that all the way through the New Testament there are exhortations such as would be given to a soldier,—not to sleep; to be on the alert; to be fully armed and equipped at all times; to watch and pray.

Now, in this conflict there are two sources of help and of hindrance, following the two spheres in which we are living—the outward and the inward. These sources of help are harmonious, and

they should be combined. They supplement each other. But, for the sake of instruction they may be analyzed, or considered separately—those things which hinder us, and belong to our lower nature; and those things which help the divine life in the soul, and spring from our higher nature.

This morning I shall consider the physical and the secular side, and point out some of those difficulties which spring up when we attempt to develop the spiritual manhood from our bodily conditions. I shall dwell upon this because it is considered less, I think, in the pulpit, than the other side is. We hear far more about spiritual helps and spiritual hindrances than we do about the helps and the hindrances which spring from the nature of the body, and the circumstances of this material world in which the body is placed.

Men are generally told, when they are attempting to live better lives, that they are to break off all known sins; but they are not always told how a sin can be broken off. They are not told to distinguish between chronic sins and transient ones. They are not told the difference between the sins that come from passion and the sins that come from pride. They are not told anything of the structure of the mind by which they can get help by the counterpoise of the different mental faculties. They are simply told to break off all known sins. This, to some extent, is intelligible instruction.

"Let him that stole steal no more." "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

All these things men know. And when their troubles come from fiery temper, and from corroding envy, and from worldly pride, and from cold selfishness, they are told to break off from sins springing from these sources. But how many know how to break off from such sins? They set over against them resolutions, and they follow up these resolutions with prayer to God; but there is no psychological insight or knowledge by which they shall have any advantage in the conquest of their sins. They are told to join the Church of Christ; to pray earnestly; to read their Bible; to keep Sunday; to do good; but the science of self-government as respects the lower order of a man's faculties is very little taught. Nor do I propose to enter into it after a philosophical schedule, and to raise the question from the beginning, and carry it to its end. That would be fitter for a treatise or an essay. I propose, rather, to select a few points that will throw light upon many difficulties which men have springing from their physical organization—difficulties which hinder the development in them of the largest ideal manhood.

There is nobody living so well as he meant to live. There is

nobody living as he wants to live. There is nobody whose better hours do not sit in judgment over the ordinary hours of his life. There is no one of us that, when we have a clearer view of the eternal sphere, of the nature of God, and of divine love, does not feel that he is sold under sin, and in whose thought fear is not continually rising, if we have not nearness of access to Christ, who forgives sins, and takes it away from us.

1. I think that men, through imperfect conceptions of truth, are continually attempting two impossibilities. They are attempting to live right, to live a better life, by compassing two things that are absolutely impossible.

In the first place, they attempt to gain suddenly a capital of spiritual power by which they can carry out their warfare against the flesh. They hope that by conversion, by some adjunction, as it were, of the divine power, there will come a flash of the divine spirit which will burn out of them whatever is evil, and that they shall, by the act of conversion, by adoption into the household of faith, fall upon the source of rich and ripe spiritual fruit—faith, hope, joy, love—and that these, as a mighty maelstrom, will be able so to turn the wheel of their resolutions that they shall carry on the whole of their mind-life by these forces that have been suddenly implanted in them. This is an absolute impossibility. A poet who has only just begun to utter truths, and utters them but imperfectly, might just as well expect that God would so inflame him that in an instant he could write as Milton could after a long life of drill and education; an artist might just as well expect, by the direct inshining of the Holy Spirit upon him, to design and carve and paint the highest works of art instantaneously, as for a person to expect to have all the force and fullness and richness of a spiritual life by an inflashing of the Holy Ghost.

We have a whole summer before we reap our corn or our wheat. We have the bud, the blossom, and the long-growing apple, and then the late-sweetening apple. It takes all the light and heat of three months to prepare the apple to be plucked from the bough. And do you suppose that the higher fruits of the spirit—love, joy, and peace—can all of them come at once, and by the act of conversion? Or do you suppose that, by the immediate shining of God upon the soul, by sudden conversion, a man enters upon the subtlest, the highest, the most difficult education—namely, the evolution and full development of his moral faculties? On the contrary, we only enter upon the beginning of that development at conversion. There is much joy and peace in it; there is much that makes it worth while; but it is to be an education, and not a donation. And the

expectation with which people enter upon a Christian life, that they are at the start to have such a capital as will last them all the rest of their days, is a false expectation. The thing is an absolute impossibility. It never did take place, and it never will. At any rate, we have no authority for saying that it ever took place.

We can distinctly trace the evolution of the character of the apostle Paul, because we have letters which run over a great deal of his life; and we can see that a riper experience characterized the last of his life than existed in it at first. He, though he was called to preëminently the highest work of men, had to go through an unfolding process according to a natural process. And experience shows that Christians, to-day, have to go through the same thing. And the expectations with which many persons begin a Christian life is a stumbling-block to them. Though they are in darkness to-day, they expect that to-morrow, by a change of heart, they will be in a full flood of light—light which shall pour down upon them continually all manner of joys and comforts. They expect that by the power of the added spiritual gift which they are to receive, they will be able to overcome everything.

Now, a person, being converted, has access to God, and a realization of the divine presence; and he has helps that he never had before; but these are but the beginning of the education upon which he has entered, which will be gradual and continuous, and will reach clear through to the very end of his life.

Over against this, there is another impossibility which men attempt when they begin to live a Christian life. Not only have they an impossible ideal, but they attempt to smother, to put down, to render inactive, those great primal forces which are organized into human life, and which, thank God, are irresistible and insuperable.

There are very many men who are so organized that their appetites and their passions predominate with terrific force; and there is a certain violence to be done to nature in their case. There is a certain restraint to be imposed upon it. But if one could, no man should desire to, extinguish all those great basilar forces which carry in them, to a large extent, the vitality and power of a man's whole life. And though a man may desire to do it ever so much, it is absolutely impossible. A man may think that he has done it; he may hide himself from these things; he may say, "I have by the help of God overcome them;" but they are not overcome.

An eminent man, once, when a person was boasting in his presence, and saying that he thought he had overcome all his sinful tendencies, took a glass of water and dashed it in his face; and he found out that the devil was there yet. He was not destroyed, though he had been hidden.

And men who think that they have overcome these organic tendencies in the mere act of being converted, are laboring under a profound mistake. After you have been living a Christian life for twenty years, or for thirty years, if you had these strong tendencies organized in you at the beginning, they will be there still. No power will eradicate them where they once existed. They are ineradicable.

Well, can they be overcome? Not in the sense of being taken out. They will be in you every year and every month and every hour of your life. But if you are a Christian, and you are living for a higher spiritual manhood, and you begin with strong secular endowments of passion and appetite; if you have large self-esteem; if you are strongly inclined to the love of praise; if you have an intense will; if you have a mighty power of combativeness; if you have a sweeping and intense tendency in you, you can use these elements; but you can never take them out of the way—never.

There goes down by the side of a man's door, a thundering brook; and he thinks to himself, "That continually rattling, that forever bubbling, that lazy, rollicking brook, I will take out of the way." Well, let him take it out of the way if he can. He may take his bucket, and work night and day, and scoop up bucketful after bucketful, and carry it away, and yet the brook will be undiminished as long as the mountain clouds dissolve and feed its sources. But that man, in a better mood, says, "I will throw a little dam across that brook, and will build a mill, and will make it work for me." Ah! that he can do. He builds his mill, and sets his wheel, and the brook is taught to run over the wheel, and the wheel works to the pressure of the brook, and industry goes on within. He could not subdue the brook, but he could make it work for him.

A man cannot eradicate his temper, but he can determine what it shall do. He can determine whether it shall become a fire under moral feeling. Is there anything in this world that wants more temper than our moral feelings? Does not all the world know that goodness without temper is flat, stale and unprofitable? Does not all the world know that a man who, before he is converted, has that force which comes from temper, is, after he becomes a Christian, tame, if he wholly restrains that temper and renders it inactive? It is because men have a false conception of moral feelings that they want a virtue which has no power, no life, no force in it. The law of development is such that just so soon as the outward objects on which we expend our physical forces are removed, we can turn them in higher intellectual channels.

Here is a physician who has large learning, and is discerning,

and who is called to attend a critical case; and he looks upon it, and reads it, and says to himself, "This is the appropriate remedy"; and he gives it, and then goes away; and he comes back again leisurely, and finds that the disease has resisted the medicine, and is marching on; and he says, "Well, I am sorry"; but this is the thing that should have been done." And he suggests another remedy; and he goes away again; and he comes back once more. He has large wisdom, but he is without very much force; and the man dies; and he is very sorry.

There is another physician—a little, wiry, insignificant fellow—who is called to a similar case. The moment he sees it, he says, "This is the remedy." And with an intensity of determination he says, "I will fight death to his face." And he sticks to the man night and day, and *does* fight death to his face; and he snatches the man from the border of the grave, and he gets well. It is the physician's combativeness working with his humanity and skill, that carries the patient through.

The power to make your better nature fight depends largely upon your putting skill and combativeness under it, and making them give spirit, and fire, and intensity, and continuity to your higher feelings. If you conceive of a man as having been created in a low and savage state, you think of him as having to do with external laws in his conflict with outward things, and as being prepared to resist the flood, the torrent, the wild beast, and the savage; but in higher relations we transfer the operation of these passions, and they become factors of society. It is by the power of combativeness and constructiveness that we cut mountains asunder, and bridge rivers, and fell forests, and shield ourselves against the elements so that the storm cannot harm us. It is by the power of the basilar passions and appetites that man measures himself against nature; and so far from their extinction being a thing to be desired, it is a thing to be deprecated. For a man who has none of these basilar feelings is what a man would be out of whom had been pulled all the bones. What was left would be of great value, but it would be of very little use. And men who seek goodness, and seek to make themselves Christians, of all men need to have fire and powder in them. The things which they are to do, and the things which they are to gain, require perseverance and push and intensity. The trouble is, not that these basilar forces are in their nature malign, but that they are misdirected.

A man says, "Pride is condemned in the Word of God; and I am excessively proud: now I will watch against my pride; and every time self-esteem begins to throb in me, I will put it down."

You fool, you will never put it down. You may teach your pride to deceive you; it may play Jesuit inside of you; but there it is, and there it will be to the end of life. But suppose you should say, "Pride, since you are there by God's appointment, be proud of higher things"? Let it have free course, and point it upward to things sweet and pure and noble. Be proud of truth. Be proud of goodness. Be proud of benevolence. Be proud of all things that lie in the direction of the upper sphere. Give force and intensity in that direction. Educate pride and self-esteem to work in that direction.

A man says, "I am called to be a Christian, and I must be meek and humble, and not love the praise of men. I must suspect myself whenever I do anything to win praise, or when I enjoy praise."

Why, you sweet and dear fool, again, do you suppose that God put a feeling of that kind into you for the sake of having you take it all out again, and not use it? What business have you to embarrass the divine Providence, that has constructed you with these things, that they might be used? God does not tell you to take them out. He says, "Educate them; regulate them; moderate them; apply them."

We are condemned, not for loving the praise of men, but for loving the praise of men more than the praise of God. If a child is approbative, do not attempt to make him less so. Persons say, "Do not praise a child before his face." I say, *Do* praise a child before his face. It is the best thing that you can do for him: but do not praise him because his hair curls, nor because he has some bright buttons on his new-made pantaloons. Do not praise him for things that are indifferent or insignificant; but if he is approbative, and he tells the truth when he is strongly tempted to tell a lie, then praise him, and let his approbateness become the guardian of his conscience in the matter of truth-telling. If a child is generous and brave, periling his own life, or his own convenience (which is a great deal harder) for some other person; if he does anything that is honorable or noble, praise him. Praise him for the upper qualities; and teach him to discriminate between that which belongs to him as an animal, and that which belongs to him as a nascent man. Then virtue will work in the right direction, and there can scarcely be too much of it. It may be in disproportion, but the disproportion will be working in the right direction.

And so it is with all the other lower feelings. It is not for you to attempt to eradicate them. You are to understand them, rather. They may be forces working on the intellectual plane, and toward the social and moral plane; and then they give intensity, variety, richness, force and naturalness to the higher moral developments.

And it would be a great deal wiser if men, instead of attempting unnaturally to get rid of these things, which they never do get rid of, would seek to guide them aright. Men have gone into caves to get rid of pride; but they have not got rid of it. If a turtle creeps into a hole, he is a turtle still. If a snake crawls under leaves and stones, he is a snake notwithstanding. And if a man covers up and hides the lower propensities of his being, he does not get rid of them, nor change their nature. He carries them in him still. If a clock has the bad habit of striking wrong, and you take it out of one room and put it into another, do you suppose it will strike right? Changing its place does not change its quality at all.

The education which life gives, is, I think, the most wholesome you could have. It may be that life is full of temptations; but it is full of wholesomeness. Life is God's great institution for training men. The church itself is subordinated to that greater educational institution, human life. To be obliged to plan, to be obliged to work, to be obliged to choose, is to have your judgment educated, and your moral force developed. To be put on your own responsibility, and to be compelled to go through trials and difficulties, is a part of the divine scheme so far as this world is concerned. All that which we call *secular society* is God's synagogue, God's workshop, God's academy; and men are put there for the sake of making manhood out of them—only you must not mistake it for the end. You must understand that it is but an instrument, and that this great manhood is to be wrought out by it, and in it.

Moderation, then, not crucifixion, literally (though that is the figure employed in the New Testament); self-government, not extinction—that is the law.

Now, here are these two impossibilities: a notion that the transformation of a person at conversion will put him in possession of higher spiritual forces; and the impression that at conversion a man can eradicate those forces by which life itself is propelled. Neither of them ought to be attempted.

2. I remark that in attempting to develop the great ideal of a true manhood, it is of supreme importance that every person should have normal occupation. The statement of it will, perhaps, seem very simple to you; but I think that industry is one of the greatest means of grace in this world. I think that industry alone, will do more than half the time is done by the school or the church, for men's integrity, and for their morality. Not that I undervalue the school or the church; but as I read the divine arrangement in this world, all these things are meant to coöperate. You might as well ask which is the most important of the fingers, or whether the hand is more or less important than the foot. They are

all wanted in the one perfection of the body. In the education of man everything is needed ; and it may seem almost ungracious to institute a comparison between the several parts of the system by which man is educated ; but if I should analyze and separate them I should put simple normal industry,—or the application of the active faculties to work, or to business, steadily, every day,—very high among the educating influences which God's providence employs. And on the other side I should put laziness, whether it be enforced or optional, as one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall a man who has the least idea of true manhood. One thing is certain : that our minds were meant to be active ; and that when men are highly organized, the forces which belong to any faculty will drive them into some sort of activity. If these faculties have legitimate business, they will be normally and wholesomely employed, and there will be nothing left to fret and work morbid feeling.

When Western steamboats run up to a landing, carrying a full head of steam, and expecting to depart again soon, they have a way of unshipping the wheel and running the engine. The wheel stands perfectly still, and the engine is playing all the while. That is to prevent explosions. There is so much steam in the boiler, and it must get out ; and if the engine is kept running, the boiler will not explode.

It is necessary that you should give some vent to the vitality and activity which inhere in you ; and if you have a regular business—that is, an appointed channel through which you are to let out your forces ; and if those forces are normally expended, they will not want to frisk or play in by and forbidden ways.

He who has an industry that is in accordance with all his tastes and appetites, is one of a million. He is most fortunate. He belongs to God's elect. He who has had given him, and who has accepted at the hands of God, a sphere of activity which is congenial to him, and through which he expends his vital forces, has in his business a great means of grace.

We hear persons say, many times, "Oh ! you ministers have nothing to do but to be good ; but if you were brokers as we are, on the street, and had to deal with all sorts of men, and you had to go early, and stay late, and watch, and suspect, and protect yourself against the dishonesties which are practiced in business, you would not find it so easy to be good." Merchants say, "If you had such competitions to meet as we do, if you had such a time as we do to get through, first, on the one side, with the manufacturer, or the wholesale dealer, or the jobber, and then, on the other side, with the

customer ; if you had all the ten thousand trickeries to deal with which we have ; if you had such a business as ours is, you would not find it so easy to be good." Now, I do not think that I have been so very good. I do not think it would take much to make you better than I have been. But the truth is, I have had just what you have to contend with. And I have had to keep busy. I have had so much to do and think about that I have not had much time for thoughts to querl back on myself. Many a man owes a great deal of his virtue to the fact of his having been kept busy.

"Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do."

Though Dr. Watts wrote that for children, you had better carry it through life. It will be as good for you at eighty as it was at eight. It is business that allays the fiery stimulus ; and if you have no business you are in great danger and great peril ; because the mind will act, and if it cannot do so normally and wholesomely, it will do it morbidly and injuriously. The effect of business is to draw off that vital force which otherwise would fever the mind.

This is one reason, I suppose, why it is better to bring up children to work, than to bring them up with continuous leisure. It is better to bring them up to play, if they cannot work, than to bring them up to do nothing. It used to be said that ministers' sons were the devil's grandsons. I do not believe it. Deacons' sons shared the same obloquy. I do not believe it of them, either. On the contrary, I believe statistics will show that the reverse is true. But there have been many instances of persons who were over-good, and who brought up every one of their children so tenderly that he bankrupted himself the moment he was twenty-one years of age, and was on his own feet.

But that is not all. If you bring up a child with an intense desire ; with a robust stomach that digests a good deal, with a bodily organization that makes blood very fast, and with a great mass of brain, which is stimulated to a high degree ; if you are situated in such a way that your child cannot work ; if you are neither a farmer nor a mechanic, but are a minister, so that you have nothing that he can do ; if you are so careful of him that you will not allow him to play with the boys in the street lest he be contaminated ; if you say to him, "You must not go out of the door-yard ; you must not be away from home at night ; you must not go to places of amusement, nor anywhere," he gets stopped up. If you could say to his stomach, "Stop digestion," and to his blood, "Stop circulation," and to his heart, "Stop beating," and to his brain, "Stop coruscating," it would do ; but the child goes on feeling, and yearning, and longing ; and as there is no work by day, and no work by night, and no equiv-

alent for work ; as there is no companionship ; as there are no expeditions to scale mountains or to pick nuts (and oh ! what was sweeter to me than that ?) the consequences are apt to be serious, if not disastrous.

That wise old man, my father, used to take us boys, and go a nutting with us in the fields and forests. The leaves were falling. The frost—kind frost, midwife of the chestnut burs—had been there before us. Then, in the woods, I climbed, and others climbed, and shook down the chestnuts which we afterward picked up. We enjoyed ourselves exceedingly. Thus we spent our forces. And I was a better boy for a week after one of those nutting expeditions. The devil did not tempt me half so much then as at other times. But when, for any cause, I was shut up, so that I could not go out, and when I moped, the devil got big in me, and I went into abnormal mischief—not mischiefs of very great magnitude, but mischiefs just large enough to procure me a whipping, and make me unhappy. I marvel that we children were not worse than we were. Perhaps we would have wrought worse mischiefs than we did if we had not been brought up in old Litchfield, that grand place for bringing up children. I suppose we were heedless and wayward ; and yet, although my father brought up eleven children to manhood, all of them have lived but one, and have been useful. There was not a great deal of mistake therefore. But where it did come in, it was from the want of a calculation of the actual forces that were at work in the children, and that would have some outplay. A child must do something, or the forces which drive him on will take abnormal channels, breaking out on one side or another.

You can say to a stream, "Run, just as you please, over the stones"; or, building a dam, you can say, "You shall jump two feet over the stones"; or, building the dam still higher, you can say, "You shall jump five feet, and fall on the wheel of my mill, and turn it." But you cannot stop the stream. It must go somewhere, either over your dam, or under it, or around it.

So in human life, the forces of children must have some vent and outlet—and that in proportion as they are organized nobly ; and if you do not give them the right kind of vent, they will get the wrong kind.

Sometimes it is said, What is the use of this government of children ? There is Mr. McCrea : he has been governing his children for twenty years ; and just look at them !" But how did he govern them ? He tied them up ; he watched them ; he never trusted them ; he never let them make mistakes. Whereas, the best lessons a man ever has are his mistakes. And if you never put children on

their feet; if you never develop in them the power of self-government; if you afford them no opportunity of intense activity, you deprive them of that which is of the utmost importance to them. What children and men need is a wholesome sphere in which to expend the forces of their being. And as you go up in life, if you have nothing to expend your forces on, they will find an outlet somewhere.

Men often say to me, "How can I control my wandering thoughts and vagrant imaginations?" God's way of controlling these things is to use the forces of the mind before they become vagrant and abnormal and morbid. And work is God's bounty. It is your good fortune. Do not let any man repine because he has to work from morning till night. It is one of the best things that ever happened to you. The damnation of thousands of young men who come to New York, is that they have nothing to do. They very soon find something evil to do, and go down into their graves before they are thirty years old. Oh, the slaughter of young men who drop away in the prime of life—good, sweet, noble young men, having in them the capacity of becoming worthy and useful citizens! Not being understood, or not being recognized, by men, and being surrounded by wrong influences, they make mistakes, and having made mistakes are discouraged, and go down one after another. My heart is sick when I go to Greenwood. It is like reading the last revelations of God, to go there and see the graves of young men, and find out their histories—what was their occupation, or how they lived.

This strikes directly at the fantasy that leisure develops piety. Why, there is nothing more dangerous than a highly educated community the members of which have no legitimate channel in which to pour out their forces.

As things go with us, women are generally more æsthetically educated than men are, and men are more practically educated than women are. There are thousands of women in every community who are large-brained, large-hearted, large-forced, but who have nothing to do. It is undoubtedly the divine intent that man and woman shall be married, and that the household shall be the great central institution of life; but in the inequalities of human life and society, it comes to pass that there are many women who do not find their mate—or not early; and they live at home. They are readers. They think that their father's wealth and standing make it unnecessary that they should toil. Neither do they spin. And there they are. And if their health is frail; if the forces which vibrate in them are, comparatively speaking, mild, they experience no

inconvenience, and live happily and contentedly. But if they have strong and deep natures; if there is in them a necessity of action, I can scarcely conceive of any persons more pitiable. There are longing thoughts, vague yearnings, which are often called *aspirations*, but which are the outgrowths of an intolerable sense of uselessness. I do not marvel that many and many a great heart dashes out into fiery dispositions, when I know the way in which human nature works. I do not wonder that many a noble nature comes to detest life.

Something to do, occupation, if one has great force of nature, is indispensable to the highest form of virtue, to safety, and to the development of the whole realm of spirituality in the human soul. Therefore we must remember, as we carry up education, that education is not enough. Occupation must be alongside of education, or there will be mischiefs breaking out from our imperfection. A partial system of education becomes more and more lamentable to the end.

[Can it be so late! I thought I had only just begun. I have finished only two heads out of six. I will not weary you: I will pass the others by.]

Sanitary morality is not enough. This looking at the body, which I have mostly dwelt upon, is not sufficient. Emphatic as I have made it, almost exclusive as I have made it, you will misconceive the spirit in which I am speaking to you if you suppose that I wish to leave upon your minds the impression that Christian character can be developed by mere training according to the laws of the body. This is one sphere, and it is indispensable; but it is only relative to a higher one. The different elements of the soul must be trained. Reflection; self-examination; communion with God; heed to the revelation of God's truth; faith; hope; love; joy in the Holy Ghost—these are the blossoms of which secular training is but the stem. Nor is spirituality enough. You must do both things. but you must train the man in his higher nature; and you must train him in his lower. You must train the higher in a wise conjunction with the lower. You must develop the nature of man from end to end, so that he shall be living harmoniously with his physical condition, with his social condition, with his civil condition, as well as with his spiritual condition.

In this large conception of true manhood, piety will become familiar, and fruitful, and bountiful, and practical, and not difficult. It is far more difficult for a man to live Christianly with imperfect views of duty and of education, than it is to take a still higher ideal with the full complement of instruments of education.

The way is not long. We ought not to be discouraged in overcoming easily besetting sins. Of all men, we ought not to feel that the yoke is hard and that the burden is heavy. The yoke may gall the neck, and the burden may not yet seem light; but the result is not doubtful to those who are faithful to the end. God, with an ever-sympathetic heart, and with an eye that never shuts, is watching his children through all this devious path; along this chequered experiment. God, who thinks more of your manhood than you yourself do; God, who loves you better than you do yourself, is supervising this evolution. And out of mysteries and partialisms and enigmas, will come completed results which we shall recognize as the work of the all-loving One. That God who broods over us, though we have gone from him; that God who said to Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings"—that God will give to all those who put their trust in him, that help and that direction which will bring them through all these critical passages and scenes, and bring them home, finally, to glory.

When you shall have cast off, sloughed, that which has been so needful in this world, but which has drawn you into sin, then how calmly will you rise to the haven of blessedness above! How will you appear there without spot, without blemish, without fault! How lustrous will they be who seem dim-faced here! How strong, how athletic, forever, will they be who have limped or toiled slowly here!

O pilgrims; burdened souls; ye that are laboring under misfortunes; ye who are traveling with difficulty the path toward heaven, hold on by faith and patience, and hear the Saviour saying, and saying with pity, "Watch against all the temptations that lure the body; pray for all the help that comes through the Spirit; and that to the end!"

One golden hour, one sweet moment, in heaven, will cast back a light of interpretation upon the dark places of the earth; and how ever much you may now be sorry that you are alive, you will never in the heavenly land be sorry that you have lived. And you will forever and forever bless and praise the grace and glory of God, when he shall interpret to you what was the meaning of your way-faring here.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Blessed be thy name, Almighty God, that thou dost stoop to converse with thy creatures! Though we cannot hear thee speaking in the language of men, nor discern thy form by these bodily senses, thou dost communicate so that the inward man knows and beholds thee. Thou dost draw near to that which is hidden within us; and by the heavenly fire thou dost quicken it until we discern things transcendent. And we rejoice that thou dost not require us to be perfect; that thou dost not require the exact fulfillment of even the things which we promise, before we can have thy love, and access to thee. For thou knowest our frame, and rememberest that we are dust. How poor are we even to conceive of noble things! and how inconsistent are we in seeking them! How infinitely full of mistakes and faults have our lives been, with here and there transgressions that rise up, and, like mountains, stand upon the horizon, all the intervals being filled up with the imperfections and manifold sins of our lives.

Yet thou art our God. Thou art our God because we are sinful. For thou art the Saviour God. Thou art the helping God. Thou art long-suffering, slow to anger, abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. Blessed be thy name, that all this grace and leniency is not because thou carest not for us, nor for our character and our best estate! Blessed be thy name, that thou art desiring to bring us out of our weakness, and out of these temptations, these sins, and these imperfections, into thine own glorious likeness! Therefore it is, that thou wilt not withhold from us chastisement; that thou wilt not clear us if we are guilty and indifferent; that thou wilt still pursue by severity those who would not be won by mercy.

We rejoice that the sovereignty of our life that is to come rises before thee as we never see it. We are the sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. To thee it is clear. The bright and glorious future thou knowest altogether. We are groping in twilight. We gain glimpses; but they come to us only in moments of temptation, and pass away again. We are of the earth. There is too much of it in these bodies. We are too much addicted to the things of the world in the midst of our occupations. They were meant for our upbuilding; and yet we are too apt to be engrossed by them.

We rejoice that thou art from on high, and that thou art perpetually correcting our mistakes, often by strokes, chastising us for our good. Thou art still calling us, and still guiding us, and still waiting for us to develop. As our fathers and our mothers waited for us to outgrow our childhood, love giving them strength, so thou, with greater love and divine power dost wait for all the generations of men, and art fashioning them. If we did not believe this, our hearts would sink within us, and we should be in despair.

O Lord God of love and mercy, who dost mingle justice and chastisement as a part of thy providence, we believe that thou hast before thee the welfare of the human race, scattered as they are, degraded for the most part, struggling with ten thousand infirmities at the best, with but here and there one who walks with God and knows the heavenly language. What wilt thou do with this great household, O thou God of mystery? We look upon the face of things; we live from day to day with marvelings, and wonderings, and heart-ache; but we know that there is mercy, and we know that there is love, and we know that there is life again, and we know that there is One whose love for the erring race is such that he gave his beloved Son to die for them; and we know that he drank the cup to the very bitterest dregs, even when it seemed to him that God had utterly forsaken him, enduring, with the prospect of his own utter annihilation, for the sake of this vast human family. And we are willing to trust such a God with all the mystery of providence, and all the unsolved and insoluble questions of his government

We desire, O Lord, not to be moved, by our doubts, from trust in thee. We desire to be held steadfast to this one center of wisdom, and the love and goodness of God. We desire to believe, not only that thou art, but that thou art with thy creatures; and that that which we do not understand now, we will grow to an understanding of. For thou art saying to us everywhere, What I do now, ye know not, but ye shall know hereafter.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all those who are in thy presence now. Thou knowest what manner of man each man is. Thou knowest what are the sins of each. Thou knowest what are the desires of the hearts that are open before thee—those that would chant forth music, and those who are afflicted, and whose tones are sorrowful. Listen to the unuttered desires of thy servants. Be gracious to every one of them, and fulfill that which in thy sight is best for them.

May those who are in darkness and in trouble find that there is a light to which they are drawing near. May it shine brighter and brighter as they go toward the path of the just. May those who are lost, and who seem left to themselves, without counsel, or succor, know that the God of Israel, the God of all the earth, is their God. And though for a time he may seem to hide his face, may they never give up to despondency, nor yield up that courage and endurance which becometh men. May they to the end strive for the things which are right and noble.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt bless our households. Accept our thanksgiving for all the great mercies, and all the sheltering kindnesses, and all the rich experiences, which thou hast ministered unto us by our companions; by our friends; by our children; by all that has made home so sweet and blessed to our thoughts. Sanctify all households. More and more may they be as the gate of heaven. And may whatever is malign and selfish, and arrogant, and hard, and wicked be cast out therefrom. And may all that is right, and sweet, and pure, and dear, and good, and refreshing to men, abound as in the garden of the Lord.

And we pray that thy blessing may rest upon all whom our thoughts follow, whether they be on the sea or in distant lands, or in remote portions of our own land. Wilt thou enlighten those who are in trouble. Help all the children of affliction everywhere. And all thy strokes and chastisements whereby thou hast made men marvel, O Lord, follow, we beseech of thee, with benign providences, that all may rejoice that thou dost bind up the wounds which thou hast made, and heal where thou hast smitten.

We pray that thou wilt unite thy people more and more perfectly in confidence one with another, and that all the ways in which men seek to come unto God may be ways cast up. May men not fortify themselves each in his own way, and cast javelins and darts one at another, making each other's way a difficult way, a burdened way, a tear-wet way. May each leave the others to follow the path which thou hast ordained for them, and sympathize, and rejoice that there are so many ways, and that all of them end at the feet of God.

And there at last receive us. There at length bring all wanderers. There grant that there may be the beginning of that new life in which is to be no sin, no sorrow, no tears, no darkness, but everlasting joy in everlasting day. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, forevermore. *Amen.*

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